



PROGRAM COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
September 19, 2012 at 8:30 a.m.
15506 County Line Road, Suite 102
Spring Hill, FL 34610

Committee Members Present: Jayne Goldstein, Chair; Rene Akins, Dawn Harvey

Committee Members Attending Via Phone: Anne-Gayl Ellis

Committee Members Excused: Angela Porterfield, Jean Rags

Staff Present: Kim Borrego, Jim Farrelly, Jak Jakubauskas, LuAnn La Cava

Guests Present: Jessica Clift, A Brighter Future Preschool; Beth Soinski, A Brighter Future Preschool; Earl Soinski, A Brighter Future Preschool

I. Welcome and Call to Order - Ms. Jayne Goldstein, Chair

Ms. Goldstein called the Program Committee to order at 8:45 a.m. Introductions were made.

Ms. Goldstein requested a motion to approve the minutes from the August 15, 2012 meeting as presented. Ms. Ellis so moved and Ms. Harvey seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried.

II. Discussion, Centers Below and Above Monitoring Standards

Ms. Borrego reviewed the following centers:

BBP: Ms. Borrego explained this provider currently has no School Readiness children.

ABFP: Mr. Farrelly explained the ownership of this center is in attendance. They understand their center will be discussed and that they may have input at the discretion of the Chair or under the Public Input segment. Ms. Goldstein requested the center ownership hold their comments until later in the meeting.

Ms. Borrego explained that on July 31 the Curriculum Specialist invited the provider to attend a Creative Curriculum training, but they were not in attendance. On August 6, it was noted that some improvements had been made such as weekly themes, but lesson plans lacked developmentally appropriate activities. On September 13, a visit was made by the Curriculum Specialist and Ms. Borrego who both witnessed that overall progress had declined. Lesson plans lacked developmentally appropriate activities and when a staff person was questioned about an experience in the lesson plans, they could not articulate the experience.

After a conversation with Mr. Farrelly, Ms. Borrego arranged a meeting with the owner and the Director as a courtesy to the owner prior to today's meeting and to inform them that the Coalition was recommending termination of their School Readiness contract.

In background, Mr. Farrelly explained that implementation of a Coalition approved curriculum is currently the greatest challenge the Coalition has among providers and a curriculum is required by the state contract. At this time, Mr. Farrelly gave a brief history of the communications that have transpired between the Coalition and ABFP including a letter from Ms. Soinski (owner) stating that Creative Curriculum has been implemented in all of the classrooms. However, a subsequent Technical Assistance follow up noted that this was not the case.

Mr. Farrelly has met with Ms. Soinski regarding the lack of a curriculum and the provider was granted more time as a new director had just been hired. Some improvements were seen in August, but a visit in September noted that progress had declined. Ownership agreed Creative Curriculum may not be the curriculum they should be using.

Mr. Farrelly stated it is his recommendation, and that of Ms. Borrego, that because this center has not complied with the curriculum requirement of the contract, that their contract be cancelled.

Ms. Harvey inquired if the contract is cancelled and a new curriculum is put in place, can they reapply. Mr. Farrelly stated yes, after one (1) year.

Mr. Akins inquired if a new curriculum has yet been implemented. Mr. Farrelly said no.

Ms. Goldstein stated the Coalition has nine (9) other approved curriculums and each has a process for implementation. If it has taken this long and this center is not applying Creative Curriculum appropriately, they may need a year to review and properly implement a new curriculum.

Ms. Ellis stated that after hearing the discussion and the recommendation she moves to discontinue this provider's School Readiness contract. Ms. Harvey seconded Ms. Ellis' motion to discontinue this provider's School Readiness contract.

Ms. Goldstein informed the Committee if they vote to cancel the contract, it will then go to the full Board, if it is appealed.

Mr. Akins commented that the provider is not up to par as far as meeting the requirements and though the new director had some positives, they fell back. He inquired if there were any kind of learning curves for new directors.

Ms. Harvey stressed the importance of staff development and training and requiring staff to study and turn in lesson plans; as a director this is her first priority.

Mr. Farrelly suggested that since a motion and a second is in place and discussions are still taking place, the Committee should be afforded the opportunity hear ownership's response before making a final decision.

Ms. Soinski stated she has owned and operated the business for 17 years. Lesson plans were in place, but she hired Ms. Jessica Clift from Discovery Point who is responsible for implementing the Creative Curriculum. Ms. Clift has been at the center for only seven (7) weeks. Ms. Soinski was not aware that her former director of 17 years was having problems and no letters or emails were forwarded to her so she was unaware until the former director finally informed her of the issues.

Ms. Soinski stated she immediately contacted Mr. Farrelly and sent him a letter. She stated she spent thousands of dollars on center improvements and hired an additional staff person. Ms. Soinski stated that Ms. Clift informed her that the center staff were going further into Creative Curriculum and that she and Ms. Clift were coming in on Saturday's and staying at the center until 2 a.m. redoing themes in classrooms. She did not want to give up on Creative Curriculum, she wanted to conquer it.

Ms. Clift stated staff is going further and working hard to understand Creative Curriculum. The staff has also worked with Funshine. Ms. Soinski stated that jobs are at stake if children are removed. Ms. Clift stated she feels she is being told her staff gave up and that Coalition trainings are not posted on the website on a timely basis which does not give her enough time to schedule her staff for trainings.

Ms. Goldstein inquired if Ms. Clift's staff understands how to implement the goals and objectives of the curriculum and based on Ms. Clift's response, Ms. Goldstein stated that she does not believe they understand.

Ms. Goldstein stated there is a motion on the table to discontinue the contract with a second. She called for a vote and all were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried.

CALP: Ms. Borrego stated she and the Curriculum Specialist had visited this center and has seen increased evidence of a curriculum in all classrooms. The provider selected HighReach curriculum.

KTFCCH: Minimum requirements were met.

LPA 54 and LPA 52: Ms. Borrego stated both providers are under the same corporate umbrella and the Coalition has met with both directors. Trainings have been coordinated at both locations. LPA 54 was scheduled for a follow up, but the director was ill; follow up will occur prior to the next committee meeting. LPA 52 has been visited by Ms. Borrego and the Curriculum Specialist and tremendous progress has been seen.

SPDC: This center scored an 83% and the CAP is due later this week. This provider is not implementing a Coalition approved curriculum and the Curriculum Specialist will be visiting the center.

CFCCH: This center scored an 84% and the CAP is due later this week. This provider is also not implementing a Coalition approved curriculum.

Ms. Borrego stated an additional twelve (12) providers were assessed who scored 87% or above.

III. First Reading, School Readiness Provider Monitoring Policy

Ms. Borrego distributed the attached policy and stated the purpose of revisiting the policy is because the state moved to eliminate ERS modeled monitoring tool as a high stakes tool. All the strike thrus in red eliminate references to 85%. The Coalition is not permitted to do anything punitive to a provider who scores below 85%; however, the provider will still be placed on a CAP. Page 4 indicates that any provider wishing to provide School Readiness must be assessed and if DCF places a provider on a Provisional/Probationary Status, the Coalition may suspend their contract and the provider would have to follow the steps of a new provider to become reinstated.

Ms. Goldstein requested a motion to approve the School Readiness Provider Monitoring Policy. Mr. Akins so moved and Ms. Harvey seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried.

IV. Update, 5th Annual Early Learning Conference

Ms. Borrego distributed flyers on the conference and stated that thirteen (13) exhibitors have paid with many more on the list. Additionally, over 300 registrations have been processed. There are 60 breakout sessions and trainers are coming from as far away as Texas, Georgia and Maryland. Mr. Farrelly added that Mrs. Scott will have a welcome prepared for the attendees via a video tape. Ms. Borrego stated that all staff who visit centers are making sure that conference flyers get into the hands of each teacher.

V. Public Input

Ms. Soinski stated that a number of people will be affected by the decision. Her staff goes above and beyond and they care about the children. She spoke of having children who were very developed and bored with the Creative Curriculum because they are advanced for their ages because they have been taught. She stated the observation was only fifteen (15) minutes and children will now have to leave and staff will be affected. She stated she had informed Mr. Farrelly that she was going to purchase the Funshine Curriculum, but he advised her to wait until the outcome of this meeting. She stated that Ms. Clift is spending many hours on the curriculum and she is ready to implement Funshine which has lesson plans for each day of the week and her teachers have used it in the past. Ms. Soinski stated that her staff is very scared when their classrooms are assessed and they are asked questions by Coalition staff.

Ms. Goldstein stated that everyone has been blamed except the owner who has had ample time to get a curriculum together and get staff training. She stated trainings are posted well

in advance and she even offered her own time voluntarily to Ms. Soinski's former director to assist the center and that Ms. La Cava is also available to offer assistance. If Ms. Soinski is truly dedicated there is no excuse for her to be sitting here at this point.

Ms. Goldstein stated she trusts Coalition staff and knows that Ms. Borrego can walk into a center and know within fifteen (15) minutes how it is being run.

Ms. Soinski stated she did not know that help had been offered and that since Ms. Clift has been on staff no classes have been attended. Ms. Clift was asked if she had contacted Ms. La Cava for assistance and she said no. Ms. Soinski inquired if they had called would they have received assistance.

Mr. Farrelly stated there are 31 Coalitions in the state of Florida and not one is more responsive to provider needs than this Coalition. He will personally come in on a Sunday morning to assist a provider with paperwork. Staff members are required to return their phone calls and emails the same day they are received. Mr. Farrelly asked Ms. Soinski when was the last time she attended a provider meeting and she replied not for a year and a half.

Public input was discontinued.

VI. Next Meeting Date – October 17, 2012 at 8:30 a.m.

The next Program Committee meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, October 17, 2012 at 8:30 a.m.

VII. Adjournment

Ms. Goldstein adjourned the Program Committee at 9:44 a.m. without further discussion.

Respectfully submitted by,

Ramute "Jak" Jakubauskas,
Administrative Assistant